#### Utah Adult Education Curriculum Framework

for

## English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

and

# English Language/Civics Education (EL/Civics)

## Administration

Utah State Office of Education Adult Education Services 2008



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#### **Resources used to develop the Utah model:**

Arizona's ESL Content Standards

New Mexico's ESL Content Standards

Maryland's ESL Content Standards

Massachuset's ESL Content Standards

Virginia's REEP Curriculum

Center for Applied Linguistics

National Literacy Summit 2000

National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

**TESOL Standards Information** 

United States Citizenship and Immigration Support (USCIS)—Citizenship Information

U.S. Department of Education's Standards Web Site

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#### UTAH'S ESOL BELIEF STATEMENTS

Ideas and beliefs about what helps to create a successful ESOL class include the following.

#### We believe that:

- Good ESOL teachers must be able to reach across cultures, genders, ages, and connect with the individual ESOL students and be sensitive to their lives.
- Good ESOL teachers perceive English as a "skill" that students must have to function in our society.
- ESOL classes should be adapted to the students' needs; the ESOL curriculum should be used as a resource for the ESOL teacher, and not rigidly followed.
- Diversity permeates the ESOL classroom in every aspect of the ESOL environment. The
  ESOL classroom may have refugees with no education in their native language in the
  same class with well-educated refugees who speak multiple languages but no English.
  Classes may include young migrant workers in search of independence alongside women
  whose culture requires that they not speak when their husbands, or in some cases when
  any man, is present.
- The best type of ESOL classroom includes respect, laughter, and warmth; is a safe haven for our ESOL students; and, above all, gives them hope.

#### We believe adult students are:

- Multi-faceted, unique individuals.
- Capable of learning.
- Motivated by diverse life experiences.
- Exploring ways to improve their lives through relevant educational opportunities.

#### We believe adult education is a student-centered, interactive process that:

- Values and supports the individual in defining and achieving personal goals.
- Develops and proves basic life skills in the community, family, and workplace.

## Adult English Language Learners Are a Distinct Group With Specific Concerns

#### Who Are Adult English Language Students?

As a linguistically and culturally diverse group, adult English language students differ from adults who speak English as a first language. Adult English language students include migrants, immigrants, and refugees, each having particular experiences, strengths, and needs. Because of changing patterns of immigration, this population is continually in flux in terms of country of origin and language background. Programs currently serve predominantly Spanish speakers; however, many other language minority groups are served as well.

The language and literacy development of adult English language students are affected by many factors, some of which are especially important for this population. Among them are:

- Language(s) spoken.
- Country of origin.
- Language in which initial schooling took place.
- Language and literacy proficiency in the first language and in English (proficiency can range from minimal to high in each language—an individual can be orally proficient and minimally literate; alternatively, an individual may have mastered reading, writing, and math in his or her native language and need to focus on the acquisition of oral and written English).
- Writing system of the student's native language.
- Status of the native language in the home country and in the United States.
- Amount, levels, and nature of previous education (can range from no education to Ph.D., and from memorization-oriented to creative or analytically oriented approaches).
- Gender expectations of the country of origin and native culture (which may or may not transfer to this country).
- Chronological age (which can range from 16 years old to elderly), age of arrival in the United States, and age of first exposure to English.
- Factors affecting the student's ability to learn (which can include traumatic events from the student's native country or from immigration, in addition to learning disabilities and/or physical limitations).
- Learning goals and motivations for learning (which may be influenced by voluntary or involuntary resettlement in this country.
- Relationship with and support of family members, many of whom may have remained in the student's home country or may be in transition to the United States.
- Former occupation(s) in the student's home country.
- Current level of economic independence and flexibility (the greatest barrier to education for many English language students is lack of money).
- Current level of work (which can range from no employment to fully employed or employed in multiple jobs).
- Cultural orientation to learning and literacy and cultural implications of seeking education in the United States.
- Exposure to and uses of English and other languages outside of the classroom.

#### Factors Affecting Adult English Language Students' Ability to Learn

Factors external to students and classrooms have a visible impact on language and literacy learning. International factors such as war, famine, and natural disasters directly affect immigration. Legislative issues within the United States, such as welfare reform, create pressures to learn English more quickly than ever before. In addition, an environment that fosters an anti-immigrant climate and legislative initiatives growing from such a climate can add urgency to the need for learning English language and literacy quickly, notwithstanding whether existing classes are appropriate, available, or accessible.

#### What It Means to Be Literate

Our conceptions of literacy shape our nation's thinking about the abilities of adult students and the types of education services that are provided. Recent definitions and goals include:

- Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential (National Adult Literacy Survey, Kirsh et. al., 1993, p. 2).
- An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society (Workforce Investment Act, 1998, originally from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, 1991).
- Every American adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (National Education Goal for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning, National Goal Panel, 1990).
- Every adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to orient himself or herself in a rapidly changing world, to voice his or her ideas and be heard, and to act independently as a parent, citizen, and worker for the good of family, community and nation (Stein, 1995, p. 4).

To be responsive to the realities of the adult English language student population, conceptions and definitions of literacy must include recognition that:

- Proficiency in other languages, in addition to English, is valuable.
- Like other adults in literacy programs, adults learning English enter having a range of language uses and reading and writing activities that change and expand throughout their lives.
- Literacy involves more than the ability to communicate effectively; it includes the ability to advocate on behalf of oneself, one's family, and one's community, and to use technology effectively for education and work in whatever languages are appropriate for the task and the purpose.

•	Language and literacy development activities (in English and in other languages) are not fixed or remedial, but rather are an ever-changing and integral part of the lives and work of every individual who lives in the United States.

#### **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program Action Goals**

Utah's adult ESOL education programs must take place within a system that is on par with K-12 and higher education in terms of status, infrastructure, attention, and financial support. This system consists of five critical components, which must work together toward the common goal:

- Program delivery
- Collaborations
- Policies
- Resources
- Research

#### I. PROGRAM DELIVERY

Utah's Adult Education ESOL programs will develop high-quality instructional programs responsive to the needs and goals of ESOL students, ensuring:

- **A.** The delivery and access to appropriate, high-quality ESOL classes, with components that may include:
  - Native language services.
  - Bilingual services.
  - Vocational and pre-vocational ESOL training.
  - Workplace ESOL training.
  - English and Spanish GED preparation.
  - Academic content and skills preparation.
  - Functional or life skills preparation.
  - Citizenship and civics education.
  - Displaced workers training.
  - Inter-generational (family) literacy preparation.

#### Program delivery options must:

- 1. Match the given social and educational context with the goals and needs of the English language student population they are serving.
- 2. Create/support instructional delivery systems that encourage the staff to achieve program intensity and rigor as defined in the ESOL Program Standards.
- 3. Create/implement a program self-evaluation and an accountability system recognizing linguistic and cultural diversity of the program staff and the student population.
- 4. Provide/facilitate access to non-instructional services such as child care; health care; transportation; social and legal counseling in human and civil rights; job counseling, placement, and employment services; immigration services; and mental health counseling.

- 5. Establish/maintain communication within and across programs, allowing adult English language students to progress through the ESOL instructional levels to more advanced academic instruction, including GED preparation, adult secondary education, and workforce preparation classes, as well as post-secondary and/or training opportunities within the community.
- **B.** Needs assessments are to be completed within the communities, ensuring that adults who may qualify for ESOL services are identified. Results of completed needs assessments will assist programs in determining the appropriate types and quantity of ESOL services to be provided. As a result, programs will:
  - 1. Institute flexible programming schedules allowing for student learning to occur when and where needed and appropriate. This might include class offerings in the mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends; classes on site (at the program center) and off site (in local neighborhoods or at a workplace). Flexible programming also ensures that students are provided with educational opportunities meeting their academic needs that may be accomplished through the use of volunteers or instructional assistants, in addition to instructional accommodations due to disabilities or other needs.
  - 2. Assure student participation taking into consideration the student's ability to pay.
- **C.** Employment of program staff members who are highly qualified and adequately compensated on par with K-12 education professionals.
  - 1. Teacher (and other program staff) salaries, benefits, and working conditions are to be commensurate with education, credentials, experience, and responsibilities.
  - 2. Provide paid preparation and professional development time.
- **D.** Provide English language students with opportunities for input into program design and instructional approaches.
  - 1. Establish/maintain program advisory boards reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of the local community.
  - 2. Provide students with regular and systematic ways to offer input pertinent to program development and instruction, as well as ensuring that instruction takes into account the students' language and cultural backgrounds and is responsive to their individual academic goals.
- E. Ensure that curriculum, materials, and instruction are context-specific and aligned to Utah's adult education ESOL standards meeting the academic needs of the adult ESOL student.

*Note:* the use of non-English languages facilitates the learning of English and develops proficiency in other languages. In some cases (e.g., a predominantly Spanish-speaking area), Spanish/English bilingual education is possible and desirable, with the goal of developing high-level oral and reading proficiency in both languages. Research indicates that literacy proficiency in the primary languages facilitates literacy acquisition in English.

- 1. Curricula must be aligned with students' goals and, as appropriate, include instruction in the following: language, culture, preparation for citizenship and civic participation, family education (including involvement with children and children's schools), workforce preparedness (movement into the workforce–workforce skill levels beginning to advanced job placement), life skills, and immigrant rights.
- 2. Academic instruction and associated curricula must, as appropriate, be in English as well as in non-English languages.
- 3. Instruction should utilize the students' existing knowledge and skills, and recognize and develop the different learning styles and multiple intelligences that students bring to the classroom.
- 4. Students are to be involved in making decisions about their instructional goals and strategies, choice of curricula, and the associated materials used to reach their goals.
- **F.** Technologies (e.g., computers, audio, video) are to be an integral part of instructional options in preparing students for the workforce while developing their English language and literacy skills.
  - 1. Maximizing and extending learning time through the use of computers should be a programming consideration.
  - 2. Program budgets should ensure that sufficient resources are focused to integrate innovative and appropriate technologies into instructional delivery and professional development.
- **G.** The program staff must take into account the realities of English language students' lives.
  - 1. Communicate with students (for program recruitment, intake, and orientation) in their native languages, utilizing community organizations as needed.
  - 2. Build program flexibility to accommodate inevitable work and family responsibilities that constrain levels of participation and continuation.

- 3. Provide additional assistance to the student, ensuring smooth transitions within and across adult education programs and post-program opportunities as well as employment.
- **H.** Utilize the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP) with supporting assessments consistent with program goals and student needs that can be supported by teaching and subsequent student level gains and learning progression.
  - 1. Utilize standardized assessments and additional diagnostic tools for student placement, documentation of student progress, and certification of program completion, describing the knowledge and skills students have acquired.
  - 2. Ensure assessments of both oral and literate skills.
  - 3. Include programming options for the use of context-specific assessments (formal [standardized] and informal assessments, learning portfolios, etc.) of student progress in assessment documentation.
- **I.** Programs will utilize teachers who are trained in the linguistic and cultural diversity of adult learners.
  - 1. The teaching staff (paid or unpaid) should be representative of countries other than the United States, and have the ability to work effectively with speakers of languages other than English.
  - 2. Professional development is to be provided for program staff members (paid and unpaid), including ways to work effectively with linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.

#### II. COLLABORATIONS

Programs will collaborate with local community agencies (including local clinics and churches and linguistic and ethnic minority organizations), as these are often the first and major point of contact for services for immigrant and refugee groups. Therefore, these organizations are critical partners with adult education programs.

- A. Adult education programs will establish/maintain ongoing collaborative partnerships with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) and other agencies in support of programming for the ESOL student.
- **B.** Adult education programs are encouraged to establish/main collaborations with:
  - 1. Community-based and volunteer organizations (mutual assistance associations, ethnic and mainstream associations).
  - 2. Service organizations (e.g., Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary Clubs; United Way; Urban League).

- 3. Foundations.
- 4. Labor unions.
- 5. Health care organizations.
- 6. Social service organizations.
- 7. Local businesses.
- 8. Public schools (K-12).
- 9. Post-secondary institutions.
- 10. Professional organizations and associations that provide information about linguistically and culturally diverse student populations (e.g., NCLE, TESOL).
- 11. Immigrant advocacy organizations and coalitions.
- **C.** Programs are encouraged to increase student involvement and self-advocacy.
  - 1. Encourage collaborating agencies and organizations to take an active role in promoting involvement of their clients in adult education programs, providing affordable support services and offering scholarships to facilitate involvement when needed.
  - 2. Students are to be encouraged to self-advocate in decisions about curricula and classroom instruction meeting their academic needs.
  - 3. Students should be encouraged to participate on program advisory boards and other decision-making bodies associated with their education.
- **D.** Programs are encouraged to assist students in making effective transitions between programs, into the workforce, into community participation, and to other areas of their lives.
  - 1. Ensure that program staff members can identify other programs and the level of services and gaps in order to best meet the needs of the ESOL student.
  - 2. Adult education programs should be seamless between programs ensuring the student seamless transitions from one program to another.
  - 3. Work with partnership organizations to create structures that facilitate such transitions.

#### III. POLICIES

Local adult education programs will be flexible and create and implement policies that are responsive to state law, rules, and policy to meet the changing needs of the population of adult English language students, formulating and implementing them with involvement of all stakeholders.

- **A.** Polices at the local, state, and national levels reflect the adult English language student population and ensure successful program delivery.
  - 1. Programs will establish policies that provide access to appropriate citizenship education for individuals participating in ESOL classes.
  - 2. Local program policies will be reviewed as part of site monitoring conducted by Adult Education Services of the USOE, ensuring that programs understand and react accordingly to the characteristics of the ESOL population (which includes individuals who may be highly educated but not yet proficient in English); acknowledge the importance of the acquisition of oral communication skills (along with literacy), ensuring that the adult education program does not focus exclusively on reading and writing and short-change English language students; and provide the time needed for English language students to learn not only the English language but also the ways in which other agencies work and how to access them.

#### IV. RESOURCES

Within the state's capacity, local adult education programs are ensured financial resources to implement high-quality, effective programs that maintain intensity and rigor.

#### V. RESEARCH

Research completed on a national level will be made available to local programs for academic programming considerations.

Program staff members are encouraged to read, discuss and implement current research practices to enhance and improve service options for English language learners. Review of research should include:

- Instructional content and strategies to meet the needs of the ESOL student.
- Methodologies to enhance educational outcomes.
- Effective uses of technology for increasing access to educational opportunities.

#### **English Language/Civics Education (EL/Civics)**

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#### **Introduction: English Literacy and Civics Education Program (EL/Civics)**

EL/Civics is an integrated English Literacy and Civics education program that assists immigrants and refugees with limited English skills to acquire basic skills needed to function effectively as parents, employees and citizens. The teaching of U.S. history and government and preparing immigrants to pass the U.S. citizenship exam have been integral part of curriculum and immigrant education for well over a century. In 1906, a statute was enacted that required citizenship applicants to demonstrate ability in speaking English. In response, community organizations, including settlement houses and labor unions, organized classes in English and citizenship. Until the mid-1900s, immigration officials granted immigrants U.S. citizenship based on their ability to speak English. Often the sole requirement for citizenship was proof of lawful U.S. residency for five years. In 1950, a federal law mandated an increase in the reading/writing skill levels, making it more difficult for immigrants to become citizens. In the late 1980s the Immigration Reform and Control Act granted limited amnesty and permanent residence to undocumented immigrants who followed a specific application process and received at least 40 hours of English instruction. In 1996, changes in the federal law limited some of the rights immigrants had held, including access to government services and food stamps, resulting in a resurgence of immigrants seeking citizenship to protect their interests. Although some of the measures of 1996 have been eliminated or amended, obtaining citizenship still remains a goal of many adults learning English. Becoming a citizen assures an individual the right to vote, hold a passport, sponsor family members for immigration, and receive social security benefits upon retirement. Today nearly 50 percent of adults enrolled in federally funded education courses are English language students.

Federal funding is granted to programs as defined by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) to assist adults to learn English while also learning about civil rights, civic participation and responsibility, and obtaining citizenship. State funding may also be used to support English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) programming. The purpose of the U.S. Department of Education's English Literacy and Civics (EL/Civics) Education funding is to support programs in providing academic instruction to immigrants and refugees, increasing their access to English literacy programs focused specifically on civics education. *Civics education* is defined by the *Federal Register* (1999) as "an educational program that emphasizes contextualized instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members." EL/Civics classes introduce students to civics-related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills.

#### **Purpose:**

Depending on the type of program and funding (state and/or federal), EL/Civics Education may be included in a general ESL class or specifically designated classes that highlight learning English in a civics education context. The purposes of the class are to:

- Provide instruction on how to obtain U.S. citizenship.
- Provide instruction about U.S. history and culture, including lessons on diversity and multiculturalism.
- Provide the students with instruction and guidance on becoming active participants in their local communities as residents, parents, workers and community members.

#### **Local Program Responsibilities:**

Programs offering EL/Civics Education programs must provide assurances that adult education program rules are adhered to.

Prior to receiving services, an EL/Civics student must have completed the enrollment process as an enrollee inclusive of an intake, full assessment and the completion of a Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP) based on the established Entering Functioning Level (EFL) and the completion of 12 contact hours.

Programs must provide assurance that EL/Civics AEFLA funds are used specifically to:

- Provide instruction on how to gain U.S. citizenship.
- Provide instruction about U.S. history and culture, including diversity and multiculturalism.
- Provide instruction and guidance on becoming active participants within the local community.

Curriculum materials chosen must be adult oriented, of the appropriate language and literacy proficiency levels, current, and culturally sensitive.

Classroom activities should appeal to adult students with a variety of learning styles, and incorporate the learners' previous knowledge and experience.

Student data and outcomes will be gathered and reported using the Utah Online Performance Information for Adult Education (UTOPIA) system.

The National Reporting Systems (NRS) Educational Functioning Level Tables (as follows) serve as a baseline for a student's entry level into an EL/Civics program.

#### **Defining Civics Education:**

EL/Civics is an integrated English literacy and civics education program that assists immigrants and refugees with limited English skills to acquire basic skills needed to function effectively as parents, employees and citizens. For adult English language students, civics education is a broad term that includes providing instruction about United States history and culture, lessons on diversity and multiculturalism, and instruction and guidance on becoming active participants in their new communities.

The content of EL/Civics classes includes the history and structure of the U.S. government (i.e., the executive, legislative, and judicial branches); the geographical history and current geopolitical structure of the country; the roles and responsibilities of the president and the White House; and the U.S. legal and education systems. These are the components of a curriculum designed to guide students in becoming knowledgeable citizens and active community members.

EL/Civics education must cover civics content in a structured, deliberate way. Additionally, students' individual academic goals must also be determined and addressed. For example, students in El/Civics classes may need specific, direct instruction on the procedures and content required for citizenship examination. Others may want to learn about U.S. history and government to ease the process of settling in the United States and becoming informed, confident members of society.

Significant civics content can be imparted at all ESOL levels at the same time as students are acquiring English.

#### Beginning level students can:

- Learn about community, government, and history through pre-reading and hands-on activities.
- Alphabetize names of states, label maps, and practice sight words relating to agencies in their community.
- Can also practice their speaking and listening skills as they share their opinions about important social or political issues pertinent to themselves and their local community.

Beginning level students can participate in understanding U.S. communities, government, and history while they participate in hands-on activities, pre-reading, and activities that help them develop the fine motor skills needed for writing. Using pictures cut from magazines, students can make collages that represent their communities. Simple games such as bingo and concentration can be played to reinforce words students have been working with in the content unit. To make course material more meaningful, tours of community places or events, both virtual (via the Internet) and real, can be arranged for the students.

#### Intermediate level students can:

- Participate in reading and writing activities about American culture and history.
- Prepare and present oral reports pertaining to what they have learned.

#### Advanced level students can:

- Invite local officials to speak to the class.
- Volunteer in community organizations.
- Practice their writing skills writing letters to the editor, e-mailing members of Congress, or researching and writing essays about an aspect of American history or culture.

An important objective of all civics education classes should be to help immigrants learn how to seek and use the assistance of others to learn rules and procedures in order to assimilate smoothly into their new community and country. Civics instruction should provide a basis for understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens and a framework for competent and responsible participation.

The Utah Content Standards are consistent in outlining the skills for each proficiency level across all programs in the state. They are aligned with the standards developed by the National Institute for Literacy and the National Reporting System (NRS), which describes the levels of proficiency and provides benchmarks for the BEST Literacy *and* BEST Plus or CASAS standardized testing.

When planning instruction, teachers should look for ways to link the Content Standards within the context of the student's academic goals. The standards should be used as guidelines for identifying skills and the learning context of the program's curriculum.

The Content Standards are organized according to ESOL program level:

- Beginning Literacy ESOL
- Low Beginning ESOL
- High Beginning ESOL
- Low Intermediate ESOL
- High Intermediate ESOL
- Advanced ESOL

The learning proficiencies—reading, writing, listening/speaking, and supporting grammar—and related standards, assessments, competencies and instructional resources are included in the Utah ESOL/EL Civics Education Content Standards and Program Instructional Resources.

#### **Understanding This Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide standards for English language instruction for limited-English-proficient adults, increasing their ability to communicate effectively in English.

The content is compatible with principles of language acquisition for adult students of English and includes skills useful in the workplace, life, and civics/academic applications. Skills are integrated into reading, writing, speaking, and listening formats.

The standards are divided into six ESOL levels, identified by the National Reporting System (NRS).

Progression through the levels is measured by approved standardized tests—BEST Literacy *and* BEST *Plus* or CASAS.

The top area identifies the STRAND				
Column 1- Describes the STANDARD	Column 2 - Describes the BENCHMARKS	Column 3 - Identifies how the EL/Civics Syllabus relates to the Standards and Benchmarks		

It is not intended that students will progress through these standards sequentially. Teachers may present topic-centered lessons that integrate skills from several areas.

#### **FRAMEWORK**

A curriculum framework offers a basic structure for how and what is taught in adult ESOL programs. It does *not* contain lesson plans or scope and sequence charts, but rather describes the content areas and skills with which each program and teacher can design a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of his/her particular group of students. Curriculum frameworks are meant to serve as a guide to instruction.

#### **Core Concept**

This framework articulates the knowledge and skills adult ESOL students need in order to communicate effectively and confidently in English so that they can meet their needs; advocate for themselves, their families, and their communities; and participate more fully in U.S. society.

The content outlined in this document is meant for all levels of ESOL students, from beginning to advanced. It applies to various program contexts, including general ESOL, ESOL literacy, workplace education, family literacy, corrections, civics education, or those that transition students to higher education, vocational training and/or employment. The core concept of the ESOL Framework recognizes two critical dimensions of adult education:

- A focus on skills, not content.
- An acknowledgment that adults are developing their skills in order to use them in specific contexts.

The skills necessary for mastery of English language learning are contained within the six strands of this framework.

The strands are as follows:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Navigating Systems
- Inter-Cultural Knowledge and Skills
- Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning, and Civics Education
- Citizenship

All of these skills, in turn, are necessary for mastery of generative skills: communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and lifelong learning skills.

Considering language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in these contexts and seeing their interrelatedness allow teachers to develop and implement a curriculum that will help students to meet high academic standards and help them to meet the challenges and responsibilities of their many roles.

#### **Guiding Principles**

Seven guiding principles influence effective learning, teaching, and assessment practices for the ESOL student.

1. Adults come to ESOL classes with a diversity of native language skills, formal education, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and life experiences, that impact their learning. It is important that teachers use their understanding of these differences to guide their selection and assessment of program models, curriculum materials, and teaching strategies.

It is critical for teachers to be aware of the characteristics of their students, and to develop lessons addressing both the strengths and the needs of their individual students. Whereas some students may have little formal education but a great command of basic spoken English, others may have an excellent grasp of formal grammar but be unable to understand native English speakers in real-life situations. If teachers are aware of the differences within their classes, they can develop lessons that build on the student's strengths, addressing individual needs.

In order for teachers to plan classes that best address the particular needs of students, careful assessment needs to be done, both when students enter the program and as they progress. In particular, teachers need to obtain information about students' native-language literacy skills. Whether it will be possible to set up native-language literacy classes or not will be based on a variety of factors. What is crucial is for each program to decide how it will address the particular needs of ESOL students with little or no first-language education.

Once students are placed in classes, instructional methods and materials should be chosen based on the students' learning styles and needs, paying attention to differences in formal education, age, cultural background, interests, and life experiences. Teachers also need to be aware of how learning disabilities may affect the progress of some ESOL students, and seek assistance in assessing and providing accommodations ensuring student success. It is important for teachers to use a wide variety of teaching strategies in order to help <u>all</u> students progress.

2. Adult students come to ESOL programs with a variety of motivations for learning English, a range of personal, educational and career goals, and differing expectations about the learning process. It is important that teachers, program staff members, and students work together to identify students' goals and expectations through the Student Education/Occupation Plan (SEOP) ensuring that the program's curriculum, instruction, and assessments address the students' short- and long-term goals.

Teachers and counseling staff members need to meet with students early (within the first 12 hours of contact in the program) to identify their most urgent needs for using English. These will vary greatly based on the students' life circumstances. For example, newcomers to the community may have a need to learn how to navigate the public transportation system. Students from smaller immigrant groups may have a pressing need to learn how to communicate with doctors or store owners in English; students who live in large mono-ethnic communities (such as Chinatown) may not share this sense of urgency.

Some students may be elderly immigrants or stay-at-home parents. These students may need English to answer the phone, deal with medical problems, sort out their mail, and handle emergencies. Many of them have family health issues as well as child care responsibilities to attend to. Sometimes whole families rely on them to keep young children safe so that everybody else can work several jobs.

Other students also have long-term educational and career goals and hope that learning English will allow them to gain entry to better jobs, vocational training, and/or higher education. Teachers need to develop curriculum that will make it possible for students to take their next steps. As students develop confidence and fluency in English, teachers may also need to place an increased emphasis on helping students develop accuracy in using standard English, in order to make it possible for them to move on to good jobs and higher education. For many students, particularly those with limited first-language education, ESOL instruction must help them develop effective student skills and learning strategies so that they are able to continue their education in programs such as adult education diploma programs or colleges.

Many adult students also experience great joy in learning English and find that their lives are enriched as they learn to understand and appreciate a new language and culture. Beyond meeting their practical goals, they also want to be challenged and exposed to new worlds through their educational experience.

As all students have expectations about how learning happens and what is meaningful to them, they will best be served if their input is solicited when making decisions that affect the process and content of their learning. It is the program's responsibility to ensure the empowerment of the students' success based on the students' expressed needs, rather than assuming they know what is "best" for the student.

3. Adult ESOL students need to develop English language skills that will allow them to understand and be understood in both oral and written English. The emphasis of instruction, therefore, should be on those activities that increase their ability to communicate their thoughts and to understand the ideas of others in a variety of settings.

For the language classroom, this implies that students will benefit from practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, taking into account the kinds of communication that happens in different contexts outside the classroom. Materials, the instructional context in which they are used, and selected instructional approaches/methods should help students improve their ability to communicate and to understand authentic English.

Reading and listening clearly go beyond word-by-word translation. Classroom activities can equip students to better understand written and spoken English when instruction includes strategies for deriving meaning: pre-reading, skimming, asking clarifying questions, and recognizing the reductions that are characteristic of American English.

Speaking and writing instruction need to prepare students to express original thoughts as well as to engage in formal social exchanges. Teachers should plan classes in a way that maximizes the amount of time that students spend expressing thoughts in English, using plenty of small-group and pair work. Classroom instruction should include strategies and practice in finding and using a Utah Adult Education ESOL Standards – Revised March 12, 2008

variety of ways to express ideas in spite of limited vocabulary. Language students also need to learn to adjust their speech, depending on who they talk with (the boss or their own children), what they want to accomplish (making a request or giving an order), or what the level of urgency might be ("I need help NOW!" or "Would you be so kind as to...").

Similarly, writing lessons should give the students practice with real writing tasks found outside of the classroom, helping students express original ideas. Letter writing and journals are examples of classroom activities in which the students practice finding "their own voices" in written English. Students need to learn how to adapt their writing style based on the audience and purpose.

4. Language students move through a series of predictable stages; however, teachers and students need to understand that progress may be inconsistent from day to day and across the four skill areas. Teachers need to plan lessons that introduce new skills as students are ready and, at the same time, reinforce old skills learned at previous stages.

Language structures are developed sequentially. For example, new language users are able to speak in simple sentences using the present tense before speaking in more complex sentences using the present perfect tense. However, language skills do not develop at an even pace. Individual students have differences across language skill areas. For example, a good writer may have difficulty with speaking, while some students may always write the "s" on third person singular present tense verbs but take years to learn to pronounce it regularly.

English language students often leap forward in their understanding and use of a particular language concept and have great difficulty grasping another. A learner may have minimal problems learning to use irregular past tense forms correctly, but take a very long time to use pronouns correctly. Students benefit from a cyclical review and reinforcement of learned skills so that these skills become internalized. Not all students will master a skill before the class moves on, but they may master it later, as the teacher focuses on a different context or topic. This is an especially important concept as teachers try to address individual student needs in programs that are multilevel and/or open entry.

Teachers should be aware that students try to make sense of a new language and construct rules about how English works based on how their home language works. This concept is referred to as "interlanguage." Interlanguage is evident as adult students try to express complex thoughts although they may have only a beginning command of English language structure. Overcorrection of mistakes at this pont will retard fluency and prevent expression of those complex thoughts. It is often better to accept the student's thoughts as expressed in interlanguage, and then verbalize back using more standard forms to focus the student's awareness on structures or lexical problems that need attention without overtly correcting mistakes.

5. Language learning requires risk-taking. Adult students will benefit from a classroom community that supports them in taking risks in authentic communication practice.

Learning and using a new language is an inherently risky process, both in the classroom and in the community. Limited English speakers will make mistakes as they try to communicate in their new language. Outside the classroom, students may face impatience or prejudice from native speakers. This may increase their reluctance to use English.

Because of this, it is crucial that the teacher provide a safe and supportive environment that allows—and encourages—students to take risks, first in the classroom and then out in the community. Students need to understand that mistakes are a natural part of language development. Teachers should avoid over-correction, which can hinder the development of fluency and discourage students from taking chances. Students should be given ample opportunity in the secure environment of the classroom to use language creatively and experimentally.

Many teachers work with their students to set ground rules for the class (i.e., no laughing at classmates' mistakes) and use a variety of approaches (such as cooperative learning) to build a supportive classroom community. Teachers should also provide students with tools they can use to convey meaning when they feel frustrated by limited vocabulary or difficulties with pronunciation. As students learn how to ask for clarification or how to find more than one way to express a particular idea, they will become more confident about using English and will thus be more willing to experiment.

Teachers not only need to create safety and develop students' confidence, but also to actively promote risk-taking and plan activities in a way that gradually diminishes students' cautiousness. The teacher can build a series of activities that move students from the "relatively safe" to the "more threatening" in order to help them develop skills and confidence. Teachers should plan time to have students share their experiences as they venture into the English-speaking community ("How did the person react when you asked your question?" "What did you do when they told you they didn't understand?").

A student's boldness in trying out his/her new language skills may be affected by his/her personality, cultural background, personal support system (i.e.,whether he/she has spouses, children, or friends who serve as translators), and his/her immediate need for using English. Teachers need to assess their students' willingness to take risks in using English and build curricula and lessons that will help students move forward.

6. Learning about cultural norms and institutions in the United States is an integral aspect of learning English. While individual students must make decisions about the extent of their own acculturation into U.S. culture, they will benefit from knowing how these systems work and how to engage and advocate for themselves within these systems.

Teachers and students need to appreciate the complexity of U.S. culture and society. It is often difficult to define the norms of American culture. Americans include people with a wide variety of values, political perspectives, racial and ethnic backgrounds, customs, and traditions. As much as possible, classroom materials should reflect the diversity of our students and those of the variety of groups who live in the U.S. without oversimplifying and stereotyping.

As students learn about American culture, their own culture needs to be validated. They should understand that they don't have to lose the personal identity and values they came here with and change themselves into new "American" people. Students need to gain enough knowledge to

compare and contrast cultures, deciding how much they want to integrate themselves into their new culture. Teachers should be sure that the materials they use are non-judgmental, and that they don't present one set of "American" ways as better or more advanced in our pluralistic society.

Knowledge about a culture includes understanding its attitudes and values, but it also includes conveying meaning through body language (gestures, facial expressions, and proximity). Students need to learn the cultural significance of body language to prevent misunderstandings or miscommunication. For example, the symbol for "okay" commonly used in the U.S. is an obscene gesture in some countries, and direct eye contact is important here but is a sign of disrespect in some other cultures.

Students need to learn how the American systems work and practice interacting with these systems. They need to learn how to access services such as medical care, community services, and the legal system. In addition, they need to be able to advocate for themselves and/or family members within the system, which may range from being able to represent and advocate for their children's school needs when talking with their teachers to responding to discrimination at their workplace and in their daily lives. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to share resources and help each other learn to interface with various institutions.

7. Second language acquisition for adults is a process that typically takes more time than most students can spend in an ESOL classroom. Therefore, an important priority of ESOL instruction is to help students become autonomous language students so they can continue the learning process on their own.

Adult ESOL students' long-term goals often hinge on their ability to communicate in English. Students may feel dependent on their teachers to supply the necessary language proficiency. Language learning is a skill in its own right, and one that the curriculum implicitly addresses. What is perhaps less obvious is the necessity of making techniques of language learning an explicit part of the curriculum.

In order to develop greater autonomy as language students, students need help understanding that the enormous task of learning English consists of a variety of activities, each targeting one or more specific language skills. Teachers can develop this awareness by introducing each classroom activity with a statement about the activity's language acquisition objective, and by periodically reviewing with the class the catalog of learning activities and the skills they target.

A second aspect of cultivating learner autonomy involves teaching the students to monitor and evaluate their personal study habits. How much time do they spend studying outside of class? How are they studying? What is working for them, and what is a frustrating waste of time? At which language skill is a particular study habit aimed? Can classmates or the teacher suggest other techniques for learning a particular skill? Class sessions that focus on self-evaluation and goal-setting help students make the most of their current language learning efforts; they also teach the students techniques for managing future learning. Along with English, it is important to teach students persistence and reflection.

Teachers should also encourage students to take advantage of learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Where possible, teachers should plan class activities or give homework assignments

that provide students with practice in learning on their own. These could include "eavesdropping" on the conversations of native speakers by talking to people at work or their children's school, by watching TV or listening to the radio, or by reading magazines and newspapers. Teachers should make time in class for students to share their experiences and reflect on what they are learning from these different sources. In this way, students will become more independent and effective language students while they are in class and will gain the skills and confidence, allowing them to continue to build their English skills once they have left the program.

#### Five Educational/Teaching Practices to Strengthen and Support Lifelong Learning for ESOL Students

#### **Perseverance:**

Perseverance is the foundation for all learning. Anyone can pick up a skill quickly and rapidly develop a certain level of proficiency, but no one learns a subject in depth without a struggle. Perseverance is the ability to work through that struggle and recognize that the frustration of the moment will yield rewards.

For adult students whose earlier educational experiences were difficult, perseverance is a hard habit to develop. Anyone who has repeatedly struggled and failed, often without understanding why, will feel some reluctance to take up the struggle again. It is important to remember that reluctance to persevere in the classroom does not necessarily indicate that a student is unable to persevere. Many adult students work long hours (often at two jobs), raise families, and take part in the activities of their communities. We educators must acknowledge the skills and habits that students demonstrate in other areas of their lives and respect their choices if we hope to convince them that the same kind of effort is worthwhile in our classrooms.

#### **Reflection:**

While the ability to persevere serves as the foundation for learning and progress, it is important that it be balanced with opportunities for reflection. The student who learns to continue through challenges also learns to discern when more effort is needed, when a different kind of effort may be needed, when to get help, and when it is time to move on. Reflection helps students to connect their efforts in the classroom to larger life goals and ambitions. Teachers should answer the question, "Why are we doing this?", thus modeling the thoughtfulness and reflection that will help students make deliberate, purposeful judgements about how to direct their efforts in order to achieve their selected ends.

#### Patience:

Patience supports and extends the ability to persevere and to reflect. For many students, the first hurdle will be having patience with the subject being studied and with themselves, particularly when they first return to school and everything is new and to some degree unfamiliar. Many students are quick to berate themselves when they don't grasp a concept quickly, have difficulty remembering rules of grammar, or can't figure out the logic behind long division. It is important that students learn to treat themselves with patience and respect consideration. It can be helpful to ask adult students how they would treat a friend or family member who had difficulty with the same task. Realizing how much harder they are on themselves than they would be on someone else can give them distance and perspective, and help them see the value of patience. Sometimes, students who are making rapid progress and want to move on to one new thing after another will resist suggestions that some repetition and rehearsal will help build a skill.

The habit of patience can be connected with students' levels of self-esteem. If students do not hold themselves in high regard, it is difficult to treat themselves and their learning with respect, and allow the necessary time and practice for the development of their skills and content knowledge. Teachers support the quest for patience when they demonstrate patience in the classroom, refuse to hurry a student along, and continually find new ways to explain and demonstrate material so that everyone will reach a deep understanding.

#### **Openness:**

Openness helps us to recognize that there may be more than one right answer, more than one way to view a topic, and more than one way to assign value to skills and knowledge. Being open relies on and extends the range of perseverance and reflection. When students are willing to entertain new and challenging ideas, to stay with them until they understand, and then to decide whether to absorb them into their view of the world, they have both used and increased their ability to be open. Being open to new ideas and ways of thinking is often the foundation for critical thinking skills such as analysis, as well as enriching one's imagination, communication, and perspective—all critical to building one's capacity for lifelong learning.

#### **Celebration:**

Celebration of student successes help students recognize that they have accomplished a goal. Once a student has become accomplished in the arts of perseverance, reflection, patience, and openness, it is time to celebrate his/her successes. When teachers are willing to acknowledge a student's accomplishments, they are building the student's self-esteem, helping him/her to become more respectful of his/her own learning. Teachers and programs need to help students realize that they have achieved a level of understanding.

#### Strands and Standards

#### **Definitions:**

**Strand:** A category of knowledge within the study of a given discipline. A strand is also a cluster of learning standards in a content area organized around a central idea, concept, or theme.

**Standard:** What students should know and be able to do within a specific content area, such as a strand. The ESOL learning standards represent the essential skills that English language students need to know and be able to do in each strand.

The following seven strands focus on the standards and subsequent curriculum development and implemented activities within a classroom.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing have intentionally been broken out into the four strands in order to highlight the skills specific to each area. The purpose is *not* to teach listening skills separately from speaking skills; oral communication is a two-way process of listening and speaking. Rather, the oral and written skill areas are separated out so both the teacher and the student can more easily identify what skills are specific to each skill area. The ability to discern what a listening skill is, as opposed to a speaking skill, or a reading skill as opposed to a writing skill, helps teachers be purposeful about what they are teaching. This breakdown of skills also helps students identify where they are gaining mastery and where they need more work.

For this reason, all four strands of listening, speaking, reading, and writing have the same three standards. The first standard in each focuses on fluency, and describes why English language students listen and speak, read and write. The second standard focuses on vocabulary, language structure, and mechanics used in oral and written communication. The third standard offers strategies specific to developing listening, speaking, reading, or writing skills. These four strands are also broken into proficiency levels one through six. Each level contains benchmarks that describe the oral and literacy skills at each level.

The skills learned in strands one and two are focused on developing fluency and meaning in oral communication. The skills also focus on developing accuracy in the use of vocabulary, structures, grammar, and conventions of spoken language.

The listening strand challenges the notion that listening is a passive activity and, through the clusters of skills at each level, indicates the ways that perceptive listening helps students to participate as thoughtful contributors in a variety of formal and informal discussion formats.

#### **Strand 1-Listening:**

- Standard 1: English language students will comprehend spoken English from a variety of sources for various purposes.
- Standard 2: English language students will acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of language structure and mechanics to comprehend spoken English.
- Standard 3: English language students will use a variety of strategies to acquire and comprehend spoken English.

#### **Strand 2–Speaking:**

- Standard 1: English language students will express themselves orally in English for a variety of purposes.
- Standard 2: English language students will acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics to produce comprehensible speech in English.
- Standard 3: English language students will use a variety of strategies to acquire and convey meaning through spoken English.

#### **Strand 3–Reading:**

This strand includes the skills necessary to interpret printed materials, including charts, graphs, schedules, and environmental print. Those skills include symbol mastery, phonological awareness, decoding, word recognition, word analysis, and comprehension.

- Standard 1: English language students will read and comprehend a variety of English texts for various purposes.
- Standard 2: English language students will acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics to read and comprehend written text.
- Standard 3: English language students will use a variety of strategies to comprehend written English.

#### **Strand 4–Writing:**

This strand includes the skills necessary for both physical and intellectual mastery of written communication. Arenas of competence include language structure and mechanics, organization, and fluency. Development of every writer's unique and personal "voice" is also valued.

- Standard 1: English language students will express themselves in written English for a variety of purposes.
- Standard 2: English language students will acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics in writing.
- Standard 3: English language students will use a variety of strategies to acquire language and convey meaning through written English.

#### **Strand 5-Intercultural Knowledge and Skills:**

People exhibit culturally defined behaviors, which are further influenced by variables such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, social class, and religion. The focus in this strand is on developing an awareness of cultural differences and attitudes, and developing the skills and knowledge needed to function in a culturally diverse society. Learning in this strand includes the ability to recognize over-generalized statements, and stereotypes and to develop a more complex understanding of cultural differences in both familiar and unfamiliar situations. This strand contains seven standards, but no proficiency levels or benchmarks.

Standard 1: English language students will identify and describe the significance of cultural images and symbols (from U.S. cultures and their own).

Examples of symbols and images might include historical symbols; popular culture images from songs, media, and advertisements; holiday images and rituals; icons; and citizenship symbols.

In exploring this standard, teachers might identify and discuss where symbols comes from, why they are important, how they represent a dimension of a culture, how the symbols compare to symbols in other cultures, and how those comparisons represent larger similarities or differences between cultures.

For example, lower-level students might, if studying about the Statue of Liberty, describe physical features of the Statue and develop a spoken and written vocabulary of emotion words to describe feelings that the Statue evokes in them. They might develop structures to describe what the symbol represents to them or others (freedom, for some, many, all, or none) and they might compare it with national pictures and symbols from their own culture.

Students at a higher level might use citizenship books and immigration laws to discuss, read and write about the issues in more complex language. They might discuss the phrase "give me your tired, your poor, you huddled masses..." in relationship to their experiences living in the U.S.

Standard 2: English language students will analyze everyday behaviors in U.S. cultures and compare and contrast these with their own.

Examples of behavior might include daily routines, dress, food, food preparation, table manners, or personal hygiene.

Lower-level students might draw charts and use Language Experience Approach stories to develop vocabulary and structures in order to write and talk about daily routines that they observe in their neighborhoods (e.g.,men, women, children, and parents). Using charts and stories or routines in their culture, they could make comparisons between what they experience in their own culture and what they have observed in their neighborhood here.

Higher-level students might interview people in their neighborhood about their daily routines. They might transcribe those interviews and compare their findings by exploring general themes and possible reasons for differences within and across cultures.

#### Standard 3: English language students will identify culturally determined behavior patterns.

Examples include small talk, nonverbal communication, taboo topics, telephone protocol, degrees of familiarity, eye contact, and use of time and space.

Lower-level students might observe conversations on the street comparing how close or far away people stand from each other and how they use their hands and nonverbal communication to convey meaning. During role-plays, they might practice nonverbal communication (e.g.,hand gestures to show anger, boredom, curiosity, etc.), and act out different situations related to spatial proximity.

Higher-level students (in a family literacy program, for example) might compare subtle differences in nonverbal communication in a PTA meeting and examine how people "get the floor," take turns, and make decisions. They could compare different variables such as formality, informality, relative age, gender, and personal style.

#### Standard 4: English language learners will analyze and describe diversity in U.S. cultures.

Examples include diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, class, gender, and age.

Lower-level students might be able to sort though authentic materials (e.g.,songs, video clips, books, newspapers) from different subcultures in the U.S. They then might use the actual objects to map out who lives in their neighborhood or in different parts of the city.

Higher-level students might read authentic materials from different subcultures in their area and compare slang, regional language, accents, cultural practices, or communication styles.

### Standard 5: English language students will compare and contrast the differences and similarities in the values and beliefs in their own culture and in U.S. cultures.

Examples include attitudes about male/female roles, work ethic, aging, independence, competition, individualism, materialism, time, and money.

Lower-level students might sort daily activities pictures by age and gender, showing who does these activities. They might compare who performs these activities in their own culture and in the U.S., and choose reasons for those differences using and developing a range of vocabulary words.

Higher-level students might analyze television shows, ads, and stories in terms of messages about roles, work, aging, individualism, materialism, time or money, and hypothesize about underlying beliefs. They might interview people from different cultures comparing and analyzing the results.

## Standard 6: English language students will identify cultural stereotypes—favorable and discriminatory—and describe how they affect their own and others' behavior.

Examples include stereotypes about race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, nationality, and sexual orientation.

Lower-level students might examine stereotypical or biased pictures, such as pictures of a housewife or homeless person, etc., from magazines and sort the pictures in response to questions such as, "Who do you like?" or "Who would you trust?" Next, they would be asked why they would or wouldn't like/trust the people in the pictures. This might lead to a discussion of situations where they've noticed or experienced discrimination or stereotyping outside of class.

Higher-level student might also examine newspapers and media for bias or stereotypes and examine their own attitudes toward different groups. They might read, discuss, and write about articles on discrimination.

Standard 7: English language students will analyze their own cultural adjustment process and the personal balance that must be struck between acculturation and preserving their own culture.

Examples include parental rights and limitations, bilingual homes, home remedies, religious and social practices, values and attitudes about male and female roles.

Lower-level students interested in home remedies might sort through remedies they have brought from home to treat different illnesses. They could separate them by what various family and community members use or don't use in the U.S. They could also develop the vocabulary and structures to create Language Experience Approach stories from the sorted materials about the adjustments they've made and their feelings pertaining to them.

Higher-level students might use the home remedies as a springboard to talk, read, and write about the experiences of straddling two cultures—what is most difficult or easy for them, and how they handle cross-generational differences and cultural practices in the U.S. that run counter to those in their own culture. They might discuss strategies they use when meeting with their doctor on how to communicate their own cultural beliefs about healing, doctor/patient relationships, or medicine.

#### **Strand 6–Navigating Systems:**

This strand focuses on helping students develop the ability to navigate through a variety of systems that influence their lives. This includes knowing what opportunities exist and acting in accordance with both their rights and responsibilities within a particular system. It includes knowing about both mainstream systems (e.g., housing) and available resources that are available to them in advocating within those systems (e.g., tenants' rights groups), as well as problems or barriers that may be encountered. Many systems are combinations of barriers and opportunities.

Common systems include the following:

- Civic services—libraries, emergency services, parks/recreation, museums, transportation, communication (phone, mail, Internet)
- Government–U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, welfare, WIC, drivers' license, voter registration, social security
- Health care–hospitals, clinics, and insurance
- Economic systems—banking, credit and other financial services, life insurance, consumer literacy, consumer privacy, economic literacy, taxes, stores
- Housing-tenant and landlord relationships, subsidies, home ownership
- Family–child care, family rights and responsibilities, Department of Social Services, K-12 schools, adult education systems, family health
- Judicial and legal systems—courts, police, legal services

While some classes might need an overview of different systems, often the particular systems that are addressed in classes are ones that are developed in response to student needs and experiences. Often students have more experience and knowledge about navigating a system than the teacher does, and working through these standards may be an opportunity for class members to act as resources to each other. The four learning standards in this strand address the general skills of being able to recognize a problem or need for a system; developing the ability to navigate and advocate for themselves within a system; assessing progress; and determining next steps. This strand contains four standards, but no proficiency levels or benchmarks.

#### Standard 1: English language students will describe and communicate their needs.

Describing needs entails learning vocabulary and structures to describe a need and communicating about the need with others.

Lower-level students might make a list of housing needs they are aware of, using pictures, gestures, and translation as necessary. This might include both needs within a dwelling (e.g., peeling paint or faulty appliances) and needs outside a dwelling (e.g., how to find an apartment, or being the target of discrimination).

Higher-level students might generate a list of housing needs, and then role-play a conversation with a friend describing a housing need, or write a letter describing a need in detail.

Standard 2: English language students will identify and locate particular systems connected to the specific needs they have identified.

Areas that should be taught include how a system works, students' rights and responsibilities within it, and related agencies that might provide resources. Often students already know basic facts about some systems, especially if they have lived in the U.S. for some time. For example, they may already be using free care at hospitals. However, they may be less familiar with their rights within a system. The students themselves are resources for each other in learning about systems.

Lower-level students might make a chart using labeled pictures of housing needs or issues, indicating which are the landlord's responsibility and which the tenant's responsibility.

Higher-level students might discuss how housing needs are handled in their native country and in the U.S., and generate a list of questions to obtain more information.

#### Standard 3: English language students will identify and analyze the skills to act in these systems to meet their needs.

Many skills can be practiced in the classroom through role-plays, sample forms, and guided discussions. Skills to practice include negotiating, repeated questioning and clarification, and ways they might confront prejudice that they may encounter.

Lower-level students might practice repeated questioning, both asking for a question to be repeated and following up on the question (e.g., if a person tells them to come see an apartment at 3:00 p.m., asking if a different time is possible).

Higher-level students might go to various housing-related agencies, acquire printed information and ask questions, and bring back the information to share with the class.

#### English language students will assess whether these systems have responded to Standard 4: their needs, determine revised steps, and challenge these systems if they choose.

Students may not immediately access all of the systems studied in class, but they should learn skills that enable them to act independently in the future. The results of various actions can be modeled and discussed in class. It is up to each individual to choose when to challenge a system (since there might be repercussions). However, students need to develop skills so that they can challenge systems if and when they choose to.

Both lower- and higher-level students might write letters to the newspaper or a legislator about an issue or need that they feel strongly about. Students might also discuss either hypothetical or real housing-related needs or other issues they are facing (e.g., if someone calls about three different apartments and is told in each case that they don't rent to families with children) and consider different courses of action that might be taken to challenge the landlords or rental agencies.

#### **Examples of connecting the Navigating systems standard:**

#### 1. Learning About the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Child Abuse

Teachers and community members can talk about the trouble students have dealing with the DCFS regarding suspected child abuse. In addressing this issue students might begin (Standard 1) Utah Adult Education ESOL Standards – Revised March 12, 2008

by discussing their experiences and/or experiences of people they know dealing with the DCFS. They could examine the DCFS abuse-prevention pamphlets and discuss topics such as for whom the pamphlet is written and what in the pamphlet is useful, relevant, irrelevant, or culturally biased.

Students can learn about the child welfare system in the U.S. (Standard 2), and about foster parenting and adoption. They may know someone who is a foster parent. They can read one of the descriptions about a child who is up for adoption from a Sunday newspaper, and discuss the steps that led up to the article being put in the newspaper and what will happen next. They could read a description of the DCFS investigative process, and compare or relate it to a summary of newspaper articles about an investigation. Students could discuss various methods of disciplining children cross-culturally. They could further their study by discussing where to find low-cost legal help and how to appeal the actions.

Students could role-play (Standard 3) various stages: obtaining information about an investigation, negotiating hearing times, negotiating with children about reporting (e.g., "If you make me go to bed, I'm going to call the DCFS and tell them you're hurting me"). Invite a speaker from DCFS to attend a class where the students can write anonymous questions for the speaker and/or ask questions in a presentation about family rights and government interventions. Students can research information about family rights and DCFS on the Internet and prepare a class report or presentation for the class.

If no one in the class is in an immediate family crisis, Standard 4 is likely to be interwoven with Standard 3. For example, after a role-play, the class can discuss what happened, various ways it could have ended, and what personal and political factors influence outcomes.

#### 2. Accessing Library Services

Some students may want to explore their local library and library services (i.e., the computer data system, assorted papers on citizenship, etc.) to research the benefits of becoming a U.S. citizen and determine their own eligibility (Standard 1). Students would examine and eventually be able to explain the steps of the naturalization process (Standard 2). Citizenship students might practice test-taking skills, discuss civics facts, and become familiar with questions they might encounter in a naturalization interview (Standard 3). Students might take a practice test and role-play a naturalization interview in class. Those who feel ready and want to go through the actual naturalization process might discuss their successes and the problems they encounter, along with strategies they used (or might use) to overcome these problems (Standard 4).

## **Strand 7–Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning:**

This strand focuses on developing students' abilities to continue learning beyond their often-brief time in ESOL classrooms. Starting with teacher-directed activities that explicitly teach study skills and a variety of learning strategies, students become more aware of which techniques/ strategies are effective for them, thus making their learning more self-directed. This strand contains standards, but no proficiency levels or benchmarks.

# Standard 1: English language students will identify and use strategies to set and achieve personal goals.

Students are expected to define long-term and short-term goals, assessing their own strengths and weaknesses, identifying resources and strategies for achieving a goal, and evaluating their progress. A short-term goal might be "I want to learn to make an appointment with the doctor using the telephone." A long-term goal might be, "I want to go to college."

Students might identify a short-term goal shared by the group (such as making a phone call), brainstorm steps toward achieving that goal, and then analyze how their steps worked or didn't work. Students might then use a similar procedure to guide them toward reaching a personal goal using the same steps as previously mentioned.

While the goals might be the same for lower- and higher-level language students, lower-level English students might require additional steps and strategies to get there, as well as more focused practice on the language needed to complete a goal.

#### Standard 2: English language students will identify and use memory strategies.

This includes strategies for learning and retaining specific information for enhancing more general language acquisition, such as linking to prior knowledge, linking to context, reviewing material in a cyclical fashion, and recycling new words. Strategies for strengthening auditory and visual memory, such as sung mnemonic devices to remember the correct spelling of sight words, are also included.

For both lower and higher levels, students might highlight words while reading, use vocabulary from another lesson, use new vocabulary in a written assignment, or draw a picture to illustrate a word. Students might also consciously work to transfer information (e.g., vocabulary or concepts) to different media and contexts—for example, in order to immerse themselves in a single topic to reinforce vocabulary. To do so, students might view a movie, read a biography, watch a television documentary, use the Internet, read newspaper articles, sing a song, write about a personal experience, or participate in discussions.

#### Standard 3: English language students will identify and use study skills for formal education.

Examples include using the dictionary, organizing information (e.g., notebooks and materials), creating mind maps, studying for different kinds of tests (multiple-choice tests such as the driver's license examination, or essays such as the GED writing sample).

Lower-level students might use guide words to look up words in the dictionary. Higher-level students might generate a mind map as a pre-writing activity or organize their thoughts before writing a first draft.

# Standard 4: English language students will identify and use independent language learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.

Examples include keeping a personal notebook of language learning, using a TV with a close-captioned decoder, watching television with a focus on language learning, asking for verbal

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correction, learning to use a pronunciation key, making vocabulary flash cards, or making personal dictionaries.

Lower-level students might keep a log of when and where they use English. They might also note new words that they used successfully and words they didn't know so they can learn them later.

Higher-level students might record news broadcasts so they can replay the parts they didn't understand.

# Standard 5: English language students will identify their learning strengths and weaknesses and develop effective personal language learning strategies.

Examples include understanding that different learning styles exist, expanding on the strategies that might enhance their own learning, and discarding those that do not meet their learning needs.

Both lower- and higher-level students might experiment with different learning strategies for gaining mastery of vocabulary words (e.g., drawings, flash cards, role play, creating sentences, dictionary work) and then reflect on which ones helped them the most.

Higher-levels students might compile a class list of all of the techniques that they employ in and out of class.

# Standard 6: English language students will identify and use affective strategies to manage feelings about language learning.

Examples include "positive self-talk" to encourage oneself, finding ways to cope with the stress that arises from the immigrant experience, and talking with others about the frustrations and successes of learning to communicate in English. For example, after giving an oral presentation (or participating in another class activity), students might reflect on how they felt before, during, and after the presentation.

At both lower and higher levels, students might use pictures to express their feelings or complete journal writing activities.

At higher levels, students might discuss stressful situations they frequently encounter and examine the roles they and others had in the situation. They might then decide which stress reduction techniques they could use.

Teachers create opportunities for students to use affective strategies in order to maintain their motivation and develop self-efficacy. They can help students realize that a little anxiety can facilitate learning. They can help students develop these strategies by ensuring that class activities are neither too easy nor too difficult.

# Standard 7: English language students will identify and use social strategies for language learning.

This includes recognizing that cultivating oral communication skills requires learning to work with at least one other person and, therefore, that learning to work effectively in groups or in pairs Utah Adult Education ESOL Standards – Revised March 12, 2008

is essential in gaining a sense of whom and when to ask for help, as well as learning to be a resource for other students.

At any language level, a student's choice of partners might vary according to the task at hand. For example, a student who can't type might look for a typist as a partner for a computer lab activities, and a weak speller should be able to recognize that a strong speller is the best choice to help with written exercises. Teacher-directed activities in which students have to mix (such as information gap activities, jigsaw activities, and cooperative learning activities) offer students opportunities to become familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses and be resources for each other.

#### <u>Strand 8–Citizenship Test Preparation:</u>

#### **Using the Eight Strands Together:**

"Listening," "Speaking," "Reading," and "Writing" have benchmarks, while "Intercultural Knowledge and Skills," "Navigating Systems," and "Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning" do not. These latter three strands cannot be measured by benchmarks and proficiency levels in the same way that oral and literacy skills can be. Nor can they be assessed using BEST Literacy *and* BEST Plus or CASAS, which measure English oral or writing proficiency.

The skills described in "Intercultural Knowledge and Skills" (Strand 5), "Navigating Systems" (Strand 6), and "Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning" (Strand 7), however, are vitally important to teach and measure informally in the classroom. The life-skills areas of the EL/Civics syllabus are very similar. It is important to teach the health, housing banking, transportation, etc., as part of the navigating systems and resources for learning. Most of the skills needed in the civics area can be taught through the use of the reading, writing, speaking and listening strands while using the class/student needs as the "guide" for how much or how little attention to these areas need to be covered in class. For detailed lesson plans in many of these areas, use the website for Virginia's Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) at <a href="http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult\_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum">http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/instruct/ctae/adult\_ed/REEP/reepcurriculum</a>. Each instructional level of content contains more life-skills units than could reasonably be covered during one instructional cycle. Through needs-assessment activities, students can negotiate which units they would like to cover. In other words, the students decide the contexts through which they wish to learn language skills. A needs assessment is a component of the "Getting Started" unit, which is the first unit (and the only required unit) in each instructional level.

#### Use Strands 1-4 to teach Strands 5-8



### **ESOL Strands and Standards Chart**

STRANDS	STANDARDS English Language Students Will			
Listening	<ol> <li>Comprehend spoken English from a variety of sources for various purposes.</li> <li>Acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of language structure and mechanics to comprehend spoken English.</li> <li>Use a variety of strategies to acquire and comprehend spoken English.</li> </ol>			
Speaking	<ol> <li>Use oral English language for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>Acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics to produce comprehensible speech in English.</li> <li>Use a variety of strategies to acquire and convey meaning through spoken English.</li> </ol>			
Reading	<ol> <li>Read and comprehend a variety of English texts for various purposes.</li> <li>Acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics to read and comprehend written text.</li> <li>Use a variety of strategies to comprehend written English.</li> </ol>			
Writing	<ol> <li>Use written English for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>Acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics in writing.</li> <li>Use a variety of strategies to acquire language and convey meaning through written English.</li> </ol>			

STRANDS	STANDARDS English Language Students Will
Intercultural Knowledge and Skills	<ol> <li>Identify and describe the significance of cultural images and symbols (from U.S. cultures and their own).</li> <li>Analyze everyday behaviors in U.S. cultures, and compare and contrast these with their own culture.</li> <li>Identify culturally determined behavior patterns.</li> <li>Analyze and describe diversity in U.S. cultures.</li> <li>Compare and contrast the differences and similarities in the values and beliefs in their own culture and U.S. cultures.</li> <li>Identify cultural stereotypes—favorable and discriminatory—and describe how they affect their own and others' behavior.</li> <li>Analyze their own cultural adjustment process and the personal balance that must be struck between acculturation and preserving their own culture.</li> </ol>
Navigating Systems	<ol> <li>Describe their need to meet with daily successes.</li> <li>Identify and locate particular systems connected to the specific needs they have identified.</li> <li>Identify and analyze the skills needed to act within these systems to meet their needs.</li> <li>Assess whether these systems have responded to their needs, determine revised steps, and challenge these systems if they choose.</li> </ol>
Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning	<ol> <li>Identify and use strategies to set and achieve personal goals.</li> <li>Identify and use memory strategies.</li> <li>Identify and use study skills for formal education.</li> <li>Identify and use independent language learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.</li> <li>Identify personal learning strengths and weaknesses and develop effective personal language learning strategies.</li> <li>Identify and use affective strategies to manage feelings about language learning.</li> <li>Identify and use social strategies for language learning.</li> </ol>

STRAND	STANDARDS English Language Students Will
Citizenship Test Preparation	<ol> <li>Demonstrate knowledge of key events, momentous documents, and historic personages in United States history.</li> <li>Demonstrate knowledge of the structure, function, and symbols of the United States government and how this knowledge applies to the rights and responsibilities of becoming a citizen</li> </ol>

#### **Benchmarks**

Benchmarks are the specifically detailed skill sets students need to develop and achieve in order to meet a specific standard. Benchmarks reference specific proficiency levels in terms that are concrete and observable, and serve as checkpoints to monitor students' progress toward meeting a standard.

Students may be working on skills at one framework proficiency level **without** having necessarily mastered all the skills in the benchmarks that occur before that level. Benchmarks encompass experienced teachers' knowledge of what is important for students to know and be able to demonstrate at a specific level. Thus, students will likely have several identified benchmarks at any one time. What is important for each student to master, however, will vary. Depending on a student's goal(s) and his/her strengths and weaknesses, mastery of some benchmarks will be more important than others. It is up to the student and teacher to determine which benchmarks are important for the student to master in a particular proficiency level. Programs should use proficiency levels to closely crosswalk with their program class design levels.

# NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM (NRS) EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL TABLE FOR ESOL

OUTCOME MEASURES DEFINITIONS						
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS – ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS						
Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills				
Beginning ESOL Literacy (ESOL 1) Test benchmark:  CASAS scale scores: Reading 180 and below Listening 180 and below BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0-1)  BEST Literacy: 0-20 (SPL 0= ss 0) (SPL 1 = ss 13-30) (SPL 2 = ss 13-30)	Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or very simple learned phrases.	Individual has none or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May be able to recognize and copy letters, numbers and a few words (e.g.,own name). May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language. Individual may have difficulty using a writing instrument.	Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words. May recognize only common words, signs, or symbols (e.g.,name, stop sign, product logos). Can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. May have no knowledge or use of computers.			
Low Beginning ESOL (ESOL 2)  Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 181-190 Listening: 181-190  BEST Plus: 401-417 (SPL 2)  BEST Literacy: 21-52 (SPL 2 = ss 13-30) (SPL 3 = ss 31-53)	Individual understands basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Understands simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.	Individual can read numbers, letters, and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Writes basic personal information (e.g.,name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.	Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Provides limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Handles routine entry-level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.			
High Beginning ESOL (ESOL 3)  Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 191-200 Listening 191-200  BEST Plus: 418-438 (SPL 3)  BEST Literacy: 53-63 (SPL 3 = ss 31-53) (SPL 4 = ss 54-66)	Individual understands common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individual responds to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar.	Individual reads most sight words, and many other common words. Reads familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.  Individual writes some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization, and punctuation, and has many spelling errors.	Individual functions in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Provides basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace, and community. Handles routine entry-level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.			

**Notes:** The descriptions are *entry-level* descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at that level should be able to do. They are not a full description of skills for that level. CASAS = Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System; SPL = Student Performance Levels; ss = Scale Scores for BEST Literacy Levels.

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES DEFINITIONS**

#### EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS - ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS

## Low Intermediate ESOL (ESOL 4)

Test benchmark:

CASAS scale score: Reading: 201-210 Listening: 201-210

BEST Plus:

439-472 (SPL 4)

BEST Literacy: 64-67 (SPL 4 = ss 54-66) (SPL 5 = ss 67-71) Individual, with some difficulty, expresses basic survival needs and participates in some routine social conversations. Understands simple learned phrases easily, and some new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with repetition. Asks and responds to questions in familiar contexts. Has some control of basic grammar

Individual reads simple material on familiar subjects and comprehends simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing familiar vocabulary. Individual writes simple notes and messages on familiar situations but may lack variety in sentence structure, clarity and focus of writing. Has some control of basic grammar (e.g.,present and past tense) and spelling. Uses some punctuation consistently (e.g.,periods, commas, question marks, capitalization, etc.)

Individual interprets simple directions, schedules, signs, maps, etc. Completes simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified. Handles routine entry-level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication for which job tasks can be clarified orally or though demonstration. Individual may be able to use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks when given directions (e.g.,fax machine, computer).

## High Intermediate ESOL (ESOL 5)

Test benchmark:

CASAS scale scores Reading: 211-220 Listening: 211-220

BEST Plus: 473-506 (SPL 5)

BEST Literacy: 68-75 (SPL 5 = ss 67-71) (SPL 6 = ss 72-74)

(SPL 7 = ss 75-77)

Individual participates in conversation in familiar social situations. Communicates basic needs with some help and clarification. Understands learned phrases and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary. Attempts to use new language but may be hesitant and rely on descriptions and concrete terms. May have inconsistent control of more complex grammar.

Individual reads text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., Clear main idea, logical order). Uses word analysis skills and context clues to determine meaning with texts on familiar subjects. Individual writes simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues by recombining learned vocabulary and structures. Can self-and peer-edit spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

Individual meets basic survival and social demands, and follows some simple oral and written instructions. Has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Writes messages and notes related to basic needs and completes basic medical forms and job applications. Handles jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.

#### Advanced ESOL (ESOL 6)

Test benchmark:

CASAS scale score: Reading: 221-235 Listening: 221-235

BEST Oral:

58-64 (SPL 6)

BEST Plus:

507-540 (SPL 6)

BEST Literacy: 76-78\* (SPL 7 = ss 75-77) (SPL 8 = ss 78 +) Individual understands and communicates in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Understands and participates in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Clarifies own or others' meaning by rewording. Understands the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech.

Individual reads moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Makes inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. Writes multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.

Individual functions independently to meet most survival needs and uses English in routine social and work situations. Communicates on the telephone about familiar subjects. Understands radio and television programs on familiar topics. Interprets routine charts, tables and graphs, and can complete forms and handle work demands that require nontechnical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Uses common computer software, learns new basic applications, and selects the correct basic technology in familiar situations.

Exit Criteria - CASAS Reading and Listening: 236 and above; BEST Plus: 541 and above; BEST Literacy: 78 +

<sup>\*</sup>If an examinee pretests into SPL8 with a scale score of 78 or higher; or into the NRS Advanced ESL level with a scale score of 76-78,the examinee should be re-tested with the TABE assessment at the time of pre-testing.

## EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE CONTENT STANDARDS: WHAT ADULTS NEED TO KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The 16 Equipped for the Future (EFF) Standards have been identified through a careful research process that began by looking at the changes in adults' daily lives. Building on research conducted in 1990 by the Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills (SCANS), EFF partners engaged adults all across the country in a research effort aimed at "mapping" the critical responsibilities of family and civic life as well as work life. Building consensus first on what adults have to do in these roles and what effective performance looks like in different communities across the United States, EFF was able to identify a core of 16 skills that constitute a foundation for success in coping with the "complexities of contemporary life" and preparing for the future.

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) undertook this effort in order to better understand what we need to do, as a nation, to meet the challenge posed in the National Education Goal for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning:

"Every American adult will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

By elaborating a new content framework that specifies the knowledge and skills required to fulfill these adult responsibilities, the NIFL's Equipped for the Future initiative makes it possible for the national goal to serve as a guide to practice, as well as policy, for meeting adult students' needs and informing system accountability. EFF accomplishes these complex purposes by providing:

- A common framework that adults can use to assess their own knowledge and skills in relation to their personal and career goals so they can shape a course that will better prepare them for the future.
- A common framework that teachers and programs can use to link curriculum and instruction, as well as assessment and evaluation, to achievement of real-world outcomes.
- A common results-oriented language for linking the services provided through this
  nation's human resource investment system—including schools, colleges, businesses,
  welfare-to-work programs, one-stop career centers, industry-based skill standards, and
  school-to-work programs.
- A common standard for demonstrating competence that programs can use to award portable credentials for adult learning.
- A common definition of important results that public officials and citizens alike can use to assure that public dollars are wisely invested in adult literacy and lifelong learning program.

In these ways, the EFF Content Framework and Standards provide a starting point for building a system for lifelong learning that is directly aligned with out national goal, a system that will enable Americans, wherever they live, to build the skills they need to move themselves, their communities, families, and out nation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Remembering that ESOL students must also be equipped for the future, it is helpful to keep these standards in mind when building lesson plans, group activities, research projects, and other student assignments that align with the ESOL and EL/Civics strands, standards, and benchmarks.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	DECISION-MAKING SKILLS	
<ul> <li>Read with understanding</li> <li>Convey ideas in writing</li> <li>Speak so others can understand</li> <li>Listen actively</li> <li>Observe critically</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Solve problems and make decisions</li> <li>Plan</li> <li>Use math to solve problems and communicate</li> </ul>	
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	LIFELONG LEARNING SKILLS	
<ul> <li>Cooperate with others</li> <li>Guide others</li> <li>Advocate and influence</li> <li>Resolve conflict and negotiate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Take responsibility for learning</li> <li>Learn through research</li> <li>Reflect and evaluate</li> <li>Use information and communications technology</li> </ul>	

The citizen/community member road map that follows can provide basic ideas for using the ESOL and EL/Civics strands, standards, and benchmarks for class activities and/or assignments.

# EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE CITIZEN/COMMUNITY MEMBER ROAD MAP

Effective citizens and community members take informed action to make a positive difference in their lives, communities, and world.

#### Broad Areas of Responsibility:

Become and Stay Informed	Form and Express Opinions and Ideas	Work Together	Take Action to Strengthen Communities
Citizens and community members find and use information to identify and solve problems contributing to the community.	Citizens and community members develop a personal voice and use it individually and as a group.	Citizens and community members interact with other people to get things done toward a common purpose.	Citizens and community members exercise their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups improving the world around them.
Key Activities	Key Activities	Key Activities	Key Activities
Identify, monitor, and anticipate problems, community needs, strengths, and resources for yourself and others  Recognize and understand human, legal, and civic rights and responsibilities for yourself and others  Figure out how the system that affects an issue works  Identify how to have an impact recognizing that individuals can make a difference  Find, interpret, analyze, and use diverse sources of information, including personal experience	Strengthen and express a sense of self reflecting personal history, values, beliefs, and roles in the larger community  Learn from others' experiences and ideas  Communicate so that others understand  Reflect on and reevaluate own opinions and ideas	Become involved in the community, while encouraging the involvement of others  Respect others and work to eliminate discrimination and prejudice  Define common values, visions, and goals  Participate in group processes and decision making	Help yourself and others  Educate others  Influence decision- makers, holding them accountable  Provide leadership within the community

### **Determining the Class Focus**

#### **Needs Assessment**

To determine students' needs and goals, it is important to complete a needs assessment at the beginning of the class. Teachers who know students' needs and goals for learning are better equipped to provide courses aligned with students' needs.

Effective needs assessment is a vital component of any education program. An ESOL student who feels as though he or she is not learning what he or she needs to know in an English class may be more likely to drop out than to express his or her discontent. Eliciting needs assessment information from ESOL adults and applying that information to course planning presents challenges. Traditional questionnaires written in English may not be appropriate or effective for all students, particularly those with limited literacy skills. In addition, the concept of participating in instructional goal-setting can be strange to adults from other cultural backgrounds.

Student needs assessments provide essential information about what and how students want to learn. Content standards provide teachers with a common framework for designing instruction as well as describing how students are learning and progressing in their classes. Teachers can prepare students to work, live, and communicate outside of the ESOL classroom by focusing on what students know and can do, and they can do this by tailoring assessment and instruction to match the students' needs. The use of standards-based education helps to professionalize the field of teaching adult English language students.

Students must be at the center of planning, teaching, and assessing their skills. For example:

- 1. Planning: Students are integral in developing their <u>S</u>tudent <u>E</u>ducation <u>O</u>ccupation <u>P</u>lan (SEOP).
- 2. Teaching: In collaboration, students and teachers can develop activities that are grounded in what students already know (e.g., using materials such as newspapers or magazines that are familiar to students).
- 3. Assessing: Students can evaluate their progress toward goals as well as collaborate with their teachers on class assignments and formal assessment outcomes.
- 4. Ongoing Needs Assessment: Needs Assessment(s) should be done routinely to ensure that the student's instructional needs and goals are being met, and to assist the teacher in planning effective lessons relevant to the student's needs. A final needs assessment should occur at the end of the course to take account of accomplishments and to help students make decisions about future educational goals.
- 5. Class Goal Setting/Curriculum Negotiation: Typically, each Life Skills instructional area contains more units than could reasonably be covered during one cycle of instruction. Through needs assessment activities, students negotiate which units will be covered. In other words, students decide the context in which they wish to learn language skills.

Needs assessment(s) are a component of the "Getting Started Unit," which is the first unit (and the only required unit) in each instructional level.

For needs assessments to be effective in meeting the student's needs, they must:

- 1. Be appropriate for a particular group of students. For example, if reading and understanding the language of a written questionnaire is very time consuming or impossible for students, then another type of assessment tool should be chosen.
- 2. Serve a learning purpose as well as an information-gathering purpose. It is important that neither the teacher nor the students perceive needs assessments as a waste of learning time. Effective activities can be incorporated into class orientation or integrated into lessons. Students should be actively practicing and using the target language while collecting and analyzing data.
- 3. Be practical in terms of time required and usefulness of the information collected. Many activities do not require a great deal of preparation or processing time.
- 4. Be processed with the group so that both teacher and students are aware of the expectations of others in the class. When there are differences in expressed needs and goals, then negotiation and compromise should occur.

For students to understand the purpose and value of needs assessment, information gathered must be applied in obvious ways during the course of instruction so that students feel that their needs are being met. Adults who feel that what they are learning is vital to their daily living and that they are "being listened to" are more likely to complete a course and continue to seek future educational opportunities.

#### Sample Needs Assessments:

- 1. **Picture Questionnaire.** Assist low-level students in prioritizing the places where they want to be able to use English. Using a visual of a fictitious person, discuss the places where this person needs to use English. As a group, complete the questionnaire for the person. Have the student complete the questionnaire individually. To process, the class does an oral tally and discusses instructional implications.
- 2. **Mind Mapping.** This activity works with all levels. Begin brainstorming with one question depicted at the center of a diagram. Students' responses to central questions and more detailed examples are added to the diagram as branches emerging from the center. To finish, a count is taken of those who agree with each response, and the tally is written on the branch. Instructional implications are discussed as a group.
- 3. **Student-Generated Questionnaire.** This form has two basic advantages over pre-prepared questionnaires. First, the areas of response are not predetermined, but are student generated. Second, comprehension of the language is not a problem because the students themselves generate the language. For example: As a group, brainstorm places where students need to read (e.g., home, shopping, work, job search, etc.). Mind mapping is a good brainstorming

technique. Brainstorm one place together to determine what students need to read (bills, notes, etc.). Write identified places on wall posters and post them around the room. Students go to the one they want to discuss in small groups. In small groups, students brainstorm a list of what that they need to be able to read. One student records. Groups share their answers with the class. Answers are written on the overhead. Students complete the questionnaire individually. The overhead can be Xeroxed for each student, or students can copy from the overhead onto their questionnaire to complete the questionnaire. The class tallies the results with an oral hand count and discusses how the results will be used. This process can be repeated to determine listening, speaking, and writing needs as well as topic area needs.

#### Example:

Things I Need to Read: (Low intermediate level class: sample responses of what is need to be read at home and class tally)	Can do	Want to learn	Not important
Newspapers	4	14	1
Letters	6	7	2
Bills	12	2	2
Telephone book	7	7	2
Dictionary	12	4	0

As a whole group, brainstorm places where students need to use English. Students write places on their questionnaire and then check the language skill areas that they need at the identified place. A class tally (oral hand count) will focus the discussion of the classroom implications of the results.

#### Example:

Where I Use English (Responses from a high beginning class)	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
In class	8	8	8	8
In the street	8	6	10	8
At work	8	8	8	8

4. **Information Grids.** This activity works for all levels. This process allows students to practice the questions that they will ask. The boxes can contain complete questions or cue phrases. After doing an example using yourself or a student, students interview each other and record answers. Use as many rows as needed. Depending on the class size, results can be tabulated on a master grid on the blackboard or tallied orally. Examples:

#### Getting to Know the Students

Name	Native country	Studied in high school?	Studied English before?	When/why did they come to the U.S.?

Survival Skills Assessment: (Do you\_\_\_\_\_?)

Have a bank account	Have a driver's license	Have a job	Use public transportation (What kind?)	Have health insurance

#### Pre-Topic Assessment: Shopping

Where do you shop for food?	Do you buy food on sale?	How do you find out about sales?	Do you use food coupons?	Do you speak English at the grocery store?

#### Mid-Course/Final Evaluation: Likes and Dislikes

	Textbook	Small group work	Role plays	Computer lab
Like				
Dislike				

5. **Timelines.** This activity works for all levels. Review time concepts (day, date, year, past, present, future). Introduce purpose of timelines. Provide model timelines(s) and check comprehension. Cut model into strips and have small groups put the strips in order. Elicit another model timeline from students (e.g., teacher's timeline). Have students make their own timelines. Discuss why information is important for instructional planning. If students have access to computers, they can type their timelines.

**6. Compositions.** Best used at the intermediate level and higher. Students read samples written by other students, then answer questions and write a similar composition about their experiences learning English and their needs and/or progress toward goals. Teachers use the information to learn about students' needs and tailor instruction to their needs.

#### Example 1: Initial Composition (Feliciano's Story)

When I came to the U.S.A., it was so difficult for me because I did not even know a word of English. When I decided to come to school, my dream was to learn how to read in English. I expected to learn how to speak more clear and perfect.

Before I came to class, I could not read in English. But now I'm able to read many things. Conversation and writing is the biggest problem that I have and that I still need to fix.

#### Questions:

- 1. What did Feliciano want to learn in English class?
- 2. What does Feliciano still need to learn?
- 3. Write a story about YOU. Tell what was difficult for you about English. What do you still need to learn?

#### Example 2: Final Composition (Omar's Story)

Actually, in my country, Columbia, I used to read and translate from English into Spanish. But, I was not able to communicate in English. When I came to the U.S.A., I had only a little knowledge of English so that it did not help me too much. In fact, whenever I tried to communicate with Americans, I got stuck. It was not easy because I could not either understand or speak. What made me come to the U.S.A. and learn English was basically professional purposes.

So far, I have taken three courses at Wilson School and I have learned a lot of things during these courses. I have improved my listening, speaking and writing. I think Wilson School has a wonderful learning center and also great teachers.

I'd like to make some suggestions. I think they should try to teach more grammar. Besides that, I think the program should be focused on more academic English instead of survival English.

I think all the students should take tests all the time in order to follow the students' improvements.

#### **Ouestions:**

- 1. Why did Omar need to study English?
- 2. What has Omar learned at Wilson School?
- 3. What does Omar think the school should focus on?
- 4. Write a story about YOU. Tell why you need to study English. What do you think about the program at Wilson School?

**7. Achievement Charts.** These are self-assessments as well as instructional needs assessment tools. Students indicate achievements as well as learning goals on an ongoing basis.

Example 1: Ongoing Class Bulletin Board

WEEK OF:	EK OF:					
Name	What do you want to learn in class?	What have you learned in class?				

Example 2: Topic-Specific Bulletin Board (JOBS)

WEEK OF:						
What do you want to learn about working in the U.S.?	What have you learned about working in the U.S.					

Example 3: Individual Diary Charts

I USED ENGLISH YESTERDAY:					
WHERE	WITH WHOM	WHAT ABOUT			
I WANTED TO USE ENGLISH BUT COULDN'T					
WHERE	WITH WHOM	WHAT ABOUT			

1. Occupational Information: Occupation in Native Country\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation in U.S. Do you work full or part-time? Job Training (where/when/what kind):\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Educational Information: Years of education is native country:\_\_\_\_\_ NO High School Diploma: YES University Diploma: YES NO Major:\_\_\_\_\_ Education in the United States: English (when/where):\_\_\_\_\_ High School (when/where): Other (when/where): 3. Course Goal: Why are you studying English? (Please be specific.) Do you want to continue studying English after you finish this class?\_\_\_\_\_ When\_\_\_\_\_ Where\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Long-Term Education Goals: Not sure\_\_\_\_ University degree (Major:\_\_\_\_\_) Associate's degree\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_ Vocational or professional license/certification (Major:\_\_\_\_\_\_) GED High school completion\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Education Occupation Plan.** Use the UTopia SEOP form, adding the following

questions:

**9. Four Corners/Vote with Your Feet.** Post names or pictures of the four language skills around the classroom. Students stand near the skill they feel is most important for them to focus on in class. The teacher counts students for each particular skill. This activity can be repeated to see what the numbers are for second choices, etc. A class consensus is reached. When consensus cannot be reached, the majority rules.

This technique can be used with other "themes" to obtain student input. Follow the procedures above, but instead of language skills, you could post:

- 1. Names of topic units from the curriculum (e.g., health, work, transportation).
- 2. Favorite class activities (e.g., information grids, computer lab, reading, dictations).
- 3. Objectives from particular topic units (e.g., for health: calling 911, making a doctor's appointment).

## Needs Assessment (NA) Feedback Form (Optional)

1.	Indicate the purpose(s) of the NA activity. Determine previous knowledge/skills Clarify goals/needs Select skills/topics/course objectives Prioritize skills/topics/course objectives Adapt materials/curricula Take account of accomplishments	Notes				
2.	Was the NA activity appropriate for the class? How?Appropriate for language levelAppropriate for literacy level	YES	NO			
3.	Did the NA activity serve a learning purpose? How?Allowed for practice or review of class workAllowed for student interaction using the tar		NO			
4.	Was the NA activity practical? YES NO How? Materials preparation time was feasibleAdministration time did not outweigh value of information gatheredProcessing could be done within the class time					
5.	Were the results of the NA clear? YES NO How do you know?Individual students could explain their responsesThe class as a whole was able to process the responses togetherTeacher was able to quantify or summarize the learner responses					
6.	Did the teacher explain how the information wa How?To select topics/life skillsTo select enabling skill areasTo set personal goals	s to be used?	YES	NO		

#### **Lesson Plans Based on Standards and Benchmarks**

In planning a lesson based on standards and benchmarks, a teacher should first analyze the standard and student needs to determine the teaching focus. Questions that a teacher should ask his/herself are:

- 1. What skill(s) does the standard cover (strand)?
- 2. What are the indicators of student progress in meeting the standard (benchmarks)?
- 3. How does the student needs assessment fit into the curricula available?

A teacher can focus a lesson by analyzing the standard to determine the skills that will be worked on, the appropriate benchmarks of progress, and the features needed in the class materials.

For example: Student survey results show the students want to learn about health and health systems. The strand is Reading, and the standards are:

English language students will. . .

- 1. Read and comprehend a variety of English texts for various purposes.
- 2. Acquire vocabulary and apply knowledge of English language structure and mechanics to read and comprehend written text.
- 3. Use a variety of strategies to comprehend written English.

Looking at the level-appropriate benchmarks and using the health Life Skills syllabus, the teacher can determine how to use health information to teach reading at the appropriate level. In doing so, the teacher covers two important topics: (1) the student directed need for health information, and (2) the standards and benchmarks for reading.

Lessons that form part of a standards-based curriculum unit begin with well-articulated objectives linking the chosen content standards and benchmarks with the student needs assessment and are guided by the framework appropriate for the students' ability level. In order to make the lesson objectives achievable and measurable, each lesson should focus on only one or two broad standards.

An effective lesson plan demonstrates the following:

- The specific context in which the activity will be carried out (student survey)
- One or two language skills that will be covered within a strand of focus
- At least one communicative task or purpose
- The method by which mastery will be evaluated

Using the health context example: A teacher might ask students to make a list of healthy foods as their communicative task. By reading their lists to the other students, the reading (and in this case writing) strand is addressed. By learning about healthy foods, the students are increasing their vocabulary and learning to comprehend the information written about healthy foods. The resulting structure of the lesson plan and activities should follow the benchmarks and objectives to gradually build the students' English skills and content knowledge through practice and

application, in preparation for a final evaluation of their ability to complete the task or demonstrate the required knowledge.

When selecting or creating materials for a standards-based lesson or activity, consider the following:

- Does it address the needs of the students?
- Does it contain the language features that the standards and benchmarks require?
- Does it match the NRS ESOL levels of the students?
- Is it engaging and interesting?
- Does it require students to practice the skills outlined in the benchmarks?
- Can it be tailored to meet differing student needs?

#### Assessment

Measurement of student progress develops from the benchmarks and lesson objectives. Before engaging students in the lesson, a teacher should have a clear idea of the intended outcomes of the instructional activity/lesson—what students should know and be able to do as a result of the activity/lesson. The instructional lessons, activities, and assessments should build and track the necessary skills to match the final assessment task, performance, product, or project based on the benchmarks.

Assessment tools are linked to progress indicators and as such must be carefully integrated throughout the instruction allowing teachers to monitor student's progress toward mastery of a content standard. Final assessment tools are related to the overarching standard. These may be used to make instructional decisions and also for accountability required by the National Reporting System standards.

#### All assessments should:

- 1. Provide the foundation for planning lessons and sequences of activities.
- 2. Track student progress from the beginning of the instructional unit until the end.
- 3. Give students something to work toward.
- 4. Provide students with feedback and a sense of accomplishment.
- 5. Offer a framework to measure student progress against the standards, benchmarks and lesson objectives.
- 6. Ensure that the selected standards and benchmarks are measurable and achievable.

TESOL, 2001, outlines a standards-based instruction and assessment cycle that incorporates four steps:

- 1. **Planning.** Create a sequence of instructional activities, based on indicators or benchmarks found in the standards, that lead to the final standards-based outcomes.
- 2. **Collecting and Recording Information.** Determine the formative (ongoing) and summative (final) assessment tools to measure outcomes.

- 3. **Analyzing and Interpreting Information.** Compare current and previous performances to measure progress of individual students and the class as a whole.
- 4. **Reporting and Decision Making.** Provide feedback to students on their mastery of the appropriate benchmarks and determine next steps, if more practice is needed.

Because standards, benchmarks, and lesson objectives describe in a measurable way what students know and can do, performance-based assessments often allow students to demonstrate this much better than traditional types of tests. Performance-based assessments (such as role plays, demonstrations, written products, and exhibitions) relate back to the selected benchmarks. These types of assessments use rubrics or checklists to show how well students perform the task and to inform students of what constitutes an acceptable performance. Once students have an idea of how a lesson links to the standard and their own needs and goals, they may be able to help develop the components of a rubric or checklist to evaluate success on a particular performance-based task. These rubrics can then be completed not only by the teacher, but also by the students for self and peer assessments. Results may also indicate how well the students will complete a similar task outside of the classroom in their daily lives.

#### ESOL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The tables were developed using the defined strands and standards descriptors from the National Reporting System (NRS), descriptors from the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), and the information from the English Language/Civics Education Syllabus. Information from the NALS survey was broken down into the NRS levels for ESOL to produce the "benchmarks" for the strands of listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, writing, and grammar. The tables are to be used as guides to curriculum and instruction for each of the ESOL levels.

The information on "Performance Conditions" and the NRS levels is based on what the students know when they begin the class.

The strands for listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, writing, and grammar are separated by NRS functioning levels 1 through 6. These sections should be used to help teach all of the other strands.

See individual level books for detailed information.